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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

OUR INTERNATIONAL PROSPECTS

From the beginning of the time when nurses met in international relations, there have always been present under the surface at these meetings, lurking shades cast by the political outlines of their nationalities. While these were so well concealed as to be only perceived by sensitive natures, still they were there.

There was always the latent rebellion of conquered and oppressed Ireland reflected in the back of the minds of true-hearted Irish nurses. There was the deep, though silent resentment that looked out at our Paris meeting, when Sister Agnes Karll impulsively offered a toast "To Peace," to which only the foreigners responded, and, again, at the Cologne meeting when, very quietly and unobtrusively the French members stayed away.

There was evident, also, at that meeting, the dark shadow then cast by Czarist Russia over Finland. Even yet we do not know whether this shade will return or whether Finland, herself, can be trusted not to harbor it. And there was present another shade that had its origin nearer home; for at the meeting there were negro nurses from the United States, refined, educated, professionally excellent, who enjoyed in that foreign environment, a personal respect and total absence of race prejudice which they were denied in the land of their birth. With the ending of the terrible war, it seems as if these shades were to become intensified, rather than banished forever, and, in comparison with the high, almost exalted hopes first raised by the burst of popular idealism and longing for peace and for an end of wars, the prospects opening before us are doubly depressing, as treaty terms expose their weak points.

For instance, we have always loved our Japanese members, but so do we also love the little Korean nurses, trained as they have been by Americans, and the fine, splendid Chinese women who have come to us and to England, for their three years' training.

Now Korea and China both, have justifiable, unrectified grievances against Japan and, on the other hand, Japan has met at our hands a shameful denial of all our fine promises of world justice and democracy, in the refusal to recognize her racial equality. Can we easily again meet the Japanese nurses, so conscientious, unselfish, and sensitive as they are, without feeling ourselves to be Pharisees and hypocrites in the light of the elementary justice denied to them while their injustice to others is winked at? What uphill work will not the German Free Sisters now have, if they try to resume international

relationship! The horrors of "Schrecklichkeit" will dog their steps.

Is there, under such circumstances, much hope that our international meetings can, within a generation or more, succeed? And they were so inspiring, so delightful! Only in one case, and that a doubtful one. That is, that women institute a definite "strike" against man's old superstitions of hatred and vengeance,—against his horrible idolatries of Moloch, Mars, and all their train. That they refuse longer to be overawed by them and guided by them. That they declare a spiritual independence, an intellectual emancipation of all those shades of the past, and assert their purpose to set and follow different standards. We were about to say—new standards, yet there is one just two thousand years old, which is safe, and one cannot call it new. Just what was meant by the words, "Love your enemies"? Just who was Christ and what place do moderns really give to him? Do we believe his law of love was true, or just a fairy tale, or that he did not really mean it, and was really telling the world that it must keep on acting by the law of the jungle? It seems to us that the time is here, now, when sincere human beings, men and women, must take up a position in this respect, and maintain it.

THE ENGLISH SITUATION

The strength of toryism (by which word we describe a point of view) in English nursing circles, is indeed amazing. The struggle of English nurses to gain self-government professionally, reads like a chapter of the labor movement and the contest between capitalism and organized workingmen.

The council of the Colleges of Nursing has sent a letter to its nurse members, advising them to ask Members of Parliament to *vote against* the Nurses' Registration Act now awaiting third reading. More than that, the College has had offered to the Act now pending, an amendment to substitute the word "person" for the word "nurse" in a context which would make it possible for nurses to be kept off the first and later general nursing councils.

The College of Nursing is resorting to all those parliamentary tricks which were employed in New York State by the opposition to the Nurses' Registration Act in that state. And the reason is the same—a determination to keep, if possible, the entire nursing body under the thumb (or heel), of some other social element; in our case physicians and hospitals, in the English case the united and banded employers. The College is also endeavoring to push its own bill through the House of Lords. Perhaps saddest of all evidences of disunion, is the recent formation of a second association of hospital matrons, formed by conservative women who have, until now, shunned every form of association!